

Bloomberg Approves Relaxed Immigration Enforcement

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[As expected](#) , Mayor Bloomberg signed off on two bills that will limit the city's cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

“The city values the contributions of immigrants,” Bloomberg said during today’s signing, “and these bills are part of the administration’s continual effort to balance protecting public safety and national security with ensuring that New York is the most immigrant-friendly city in the world.”

Bloomberg said that the bills were a direct response to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Secure Communities program with the New York Police Department. The federal mandate requires that city law enforcement agencies send suspects’ fingerprints to the Department of Homeland Security, much like a similar program called the Criminal Alien Program linked the Department of Correction with federal authorities.

The City Council responded to the latter with a bill requiring the DOC’s non-enforcement of the policy in cases where a suspect has either no criminal history or charges and who don’t pose a danger to the community. Bloomberg signed that bill in 2012, and strengthened it with his signature today. The same guidelines for DOC will now also apply to the police department.

Advocates view the bills’ ratification as equally important to the original legislation from 2011, which supporters say prevented 267 deportations by DOC.

“Since then, the law has stopped more than 200 deportations — saving money for the city and helping build trust between the immigrant communities and local authorities,” said Make the Road member Tania Gordillo in Spanish during the signing ceremony. “Now, this law will do more of the same and is another step toward a city just and humane for everyone.

The bills didn't make it to Bloomberg's desk without dissent. Seven council members voted against the legislation in late February. Among those who disagreed with the laws was Democratic Councilman Peter Vallone, Jr. of Queens.

"I support comprehensive immigration reform," Vallone [told the Times Ledger in early March](#) , "but allowing people charged with crimes to remain in this country is not part of it."

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